

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5 and 7-29 remain pending in this application. Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to more clearly point out what applicants regard as their invention. The amendments to these claims are supported in the original specification at least at page 16, lines 8-18 and claim 2. Accordingly, no new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 18 and 27-29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hosokawa et al. (JP 2000-230032). The Office has taken the position that Hosokawa et al. teaches all of the requirements of these claims. While not acquiescing in the anticipation rejection, claim 1 has been amended to more clearly point out what applicants regard as their invention by adding the additional requirement that the resin coating the curing agent (A) for an epoxy resin further comprises an aromatic hydrocarbon group (2) bonded to not less than two nitrogen atoms.

According to the presently claimed invention, the resin coating the curing agent (A) for an epoxy resin is made from structures (1) aliphatic low molecular polyisocyanate having three functional groups, and structure (2) an aromatic hydrocarbon bonded to not less than two nitrogen atoms. This embodiment of the present invention is exemplified in Examples 2 (page 63) and 4 (page 64) of the present application. Hosokawa et al. does not describe a resin coating made from these two structures, and specifically contains no component corresponding to at least structure (2). Accordingly, since Hosokawa et al. does not meet each limitation of these claims, the anticipation rejection should be withdrawn.

It also can be pointed out that the resin coating according to the claimed invention has been shown to be superior in terms of a number of important

characteristics than resins that do not possess all the claimed features. Consider, for example, Example 4 of the present application as compared to Comparative Example 2 (see Table 1, paragraph 0055 and page 66 of the present specification). Example 4 shows a membrane within the scope of the claimed invention that is superior in the overall combination of storage stability, curability, and master batch storage stability. Comparative Example 2, on the other hand, which does not contain a component corresponding to structure (1), results in a membrane that is inferior in each category of evaluation.

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hosokawa et al. Without conceding the accuracy of the Office position that Hosokawa et al. teaches each limitation of claim 17, this patent fails to teach each limitation of claim 17 as amended that now requires that the film includes an aromatic hydrocarbon group bonded to no less than two nitrogen atoms. For at least the same reasons advanced above with respect to claim 1, claim 17 is not anticipated by Hosokawa et al. and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 9-16, and 19-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,833,226) in view of Hosokawa et al. According to the Office, Ishimura et al. teaches a core shell curing agent obtained by reacting the curing agent and an epoxy resin, but is acknowledged not to teach the claimed curing agent. The Office concludes that these claims would be obvious because a person skilled in the art would be motivated to use the curing agent of Hosokawa et al. with the composition taught in Ishimura et al. to improve desirable properties such as control over the destructive temperature of the shell part.

For at least the reasons advanced above, since Hosokawa et al. does not teach all the features of claim 1, the combination of Ishimura et al. and Hosokawa et al. cannot meet all the limitations of these claims. Like Hosokawa et al., Ishimura et al. does not disclose or suggest a coating resin or film having both structures (1) and (2), and thus cannot supply the teachings necessary to render these claims prima facie obvious. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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